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THE WORD TO JESUS

*in cadence Aramaean
but in accents divine*

JACOB TRAPP



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Introduction

Humanity is the road by which the indwelling God must travel. This is the spiritual significance of the legend of the earthly life of Jesus. This is the ageless, the universally human, the dynamically religious meaning of the Christ-concept.

The sacred potential is born within you as a babe, as it was in Jesus. In the new human life the potential of the Word becomes flesh.

As the child grows in wisdom and in stature (as it was said of Jesus), the divine potential quickens into wonder and curiosity, into the capacity to throb with the joys and woes of others, into the insights of love, and into that quest of some greater excellence which indicates that there is an upward reach within the soul of man.

The Word which became articulate in Jesus was, in the form in which it came to

him, the Word of the poets and prophets of Israel. The heritage which it was the duty of his parents and the concern of his religious culture to bequeath to him was, despite its imperfections, an inspired and superlatively great heritage. We owe our children not only food and shelter and affection but also the finest heritage that we, with the help of others, can give them. For a heritage or a tradition is man's one great means of conscious evolution. The Word becoming articulate in Jesus was the divine Wisdom becoming incarnate in him, as it may in us.

By appropriating it, by questioning it in the light of his own best insights, by testing it in action, by deepening and enriching it in the sharing of it, by living it and identifying the meaning of his life with it, he made it uniquely his own. "The inspoken and ingrafted Word" flowered out into the uniqueness of his own person and the beauty of his own soul, as it may in us.

Jesus went up and down a murdered land helping people. He cared deeply that people should eat and be clothed, that they should

be healthy in mind and in body, but he was concerned above all with that to which these things are but means: the kingdom of God within, that unique flowering—so often smothered but always possible—into the finer person. Thus, further, through brother-love and brother-wisdom, the Word was made flesh.

Jesus encountered temptation and trial, struggle with evil, pain, weariness, disappointment and frustration—for these also are of the human road which the indwelling God must travel.

The doubts and conflicts overcome led to integrations on a higher level, to the moments when he could say, "I and the Father are one." He had his moments of serenity and high fulfillment, of transcending fragmentary purpose, of at-one-ness in self-surrender to the overmastering purpose of his life, of experiencing the wonderful wholeness of harmony between his highest vision of good and the basic and sustaining tides of his being.

He had his mountain of transfiguration, as have had other poets and seers before and

since—that rare and inexpressible momentary grace, of life gathered up into a rapture of sheer glory, when it seems as though, through a sudden rift in the mists of time, one feels and apprehends the eternal.

The human road of the indwelling God led also to the difficult and momentous decision (“Can I go the way this truth leads me?”), as Jesus, with a few anxious disciples, set his face toward Jerusalem.

To be a complete parable of that road and its possibilities, the way of Jesus had to lead down also to the profoundest depths of human sadness, as it did—in betrayal by one of the twelve, in defection and desertion by all the others.

It had to lead to the sublimely heroic, as when the young love of life that throbbed in his veins struggled against considerations that were finally seen to be dearer than life itself—considerations of not fleeing from danger but standing up to his message and his task.

It had to lead to that finest essence of courage, that unshakable peace of final commitment, which put aside considerations of what

might happen to self and said, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

It had to stand the test of being beaten and racked and mocked and reviled. And having passed through those fires, it rose to the sublime victory of "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

It had to pass, in utter loneliness of soul, through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, rising above it into the final commitment: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Thus the creative spirit, the indwelling God taking the human road, was exemplified in the golden and glorious legend of Jesus.

Its birth is in the human heart.

Its tomb is the unbelieving human heart.

Its resurrection is not something that was dead coming alive again, but something deathless, immortal, springing forth from the waiting seed in the heart that gives it room.

It is something real, yet always waiting to be realized.

It is a possibility, yet always also a present fact.

Not some empty cave with the stone rolled away, but this living and present discovery of the divine life is the feast of immortality of the human soul.

Through brother-love and through brother-wisdom, this divine life may be more richly incarnated, more significantly experienced and known, more victoriously realized in the life of the world.

To be religious is to be concerned with this consummation, and not with what happens to self apart from it.

To have our moment of transfiguration, when through a rift in the mists of time we catch our glimpse of the eternal, is to know things dearer than life and sometimes to lose ourselves, taking the spiral upward, beyond "I" and "me" and "mine," into this larger life.

The life of Jesus, and what it indicates of human possibility, brings something hopeful, something dynamic, something energizing and transforming into man's life, in contrast to the old fatalism and the old dependence upon external powers.

Unlike Confucius and Lao-tzu, unlike Sid-

dhārtha Gautama Buddha, through whom also the Word speaks to mankind, Jesus, the Western world's significant idealization, was not to achieve the crown of serenity and old age. He was to be remembered, rather, as wearing a crown of thorns. His symbol was to be the cross. Central to Christianity is the profoundly energizing drama of the godlike in man rising triumphant over defeat and frustration.

This drama of the human soul is forever more powerful than any combination of Caesars, who, if they could conceivably destroy the memory of it, could yet only cause it to be re-enacted. Jesus conquered, as Rebecca West put it, "beyond the imagination of conquerors."

As all of humanity is implicated in leading Jesus, or goodness, to the cross, so all of humanity also is exalted by the spirit which triumphs there over hatred and pain. Jesus was not only a significant historic reality, always a brother of us all. He was also a richly meaningful historic idealization, forever indicative of something in the nature of the

men and women who add their touch to the living portrait.

It is this conception, "of everyman in Christ, and the Christ in everyman," which underlies the meditations in this book. The divine Wisdom of the Hebrews, which Philo of Alexandria identified with the divine Logos of the Greeks, was adopted into the Christian idea of Christ, and hence also into the Christian idea of the Christ in every man. This Word or Wisdom was an eternal creative act of God, and as such immanent in God's creation. It was incarnate also in men, making them brothers in more than blood through participation in a higher principle, as sons of the Most High. Its supreme incarnation, in the Christian view, was in the man Jesus.

This Logos, or divine Word, is represented in these meditations as progressively incarnated in Jesus; also as speaking to him, sometimes in the first person, more often in the third. This device, of the Word speaking to the human Jesus, is in no sense intended to convey an impression of finality or assumed

omniscience. It is used to throw a light, from the perspectives of history and imagination, into the life of Christ as here interpreted.

JACOB TRAPP

*Summit,
New Jersey*

THE WORD TO JESUS

Prologue

THE FIVE BIRTHS OF CHRIST

*In the beginning was the Word;
And the Word was with God;
And the Word was God.*

*All things were made through him,
And without him was not anything made.
Through him all things had life.*

*This life was the guiding-light of men.
The light shineth in the darkness;
But the darkness overcame it not.*

*And the Word was made flesh,
And dwelt among us,
Full of grace and truth.*

The first birth of Christ is the Word incarnate in creation: the Logos strives with matter to create Cosmos.

The second birth of Christ is the Word incarnate in humanity: the awakening of wonder and awe in the human heart, of conscience and intelligence in the human mind.

The third birth of Christ is the Word incarnate in a people: Israel in bondage and exile dreams of a Messiah, who will lead them and all the nations of the world into a just and lasting peace.

The fourth birth of Christ is the Word incarnate in a person, in whom and through whom men come to the knowledge of the perfect law of love.

The fifth birth of Christ is the Word incarnate in every man, in every age throughout the world, in whom the law of love is born anew.

The Word at Birth

The living wonder dawns out of darkness, the moving stream is dappled with light, the light and the moving stream interpenetrate.

You can know nothing of this glory, child not yet awake, in whom I now am born.

There is more of me in the mother, who down the corridors of pain heard music and dreamed dreams and saw the heavens filled with light, and then fell into a deep sleep, from which she wakened to hold you in her arms.

There is more of me in Joseph, who stood by in awe of creation struggling to give birth, and then knelt in wonder and deep thanksgiving, because it was well with Mary, and well with the new, miraculous, man-shaped life.

There is more of me in the shepherds I have called from the fields to come and see the promised glory of Israel lying in a manger.

There is more of me in the Magi, speechless before what they cannot simulate with their arts, nor explain with their sciences, nor fathom in those profoundest intuitions with which they draw near to me.

But there is more of me, potentially, far more of me, in you.

And there is more of me now in you, asleep, clasped in the warmth of your mother, than in all the stars of the sky.

The Word in Infancy

I, the Word that shaped you in your mother's womb, the Word that was with God when the morning stars sang together, and when on the dawn of all visible worlds lay the grace and dew of freshness and wonder, am within you now.

I am that by which the myriad cells of your body cohere and work together, to make it an elastic and sensitive instrument in the human form.

I am that by which your body blossoms into its proper growth, and your eyes brighten, and your arms reach out.

I am that by which your senses open to light and color, to sound and movement, to heat and cold and pressure, to hunger and

pain and delight, to the feel and flavors and fragrances of things.

I am that by which your brain wakens to the recognition of these, and begins to arrange them in their order.

I am the Word in you before you have spoken a word.

I am the first slow dawn of wonder as you open the eyes of your soul.

I am in everything you feel and touch and hear and see, and in the powerful forces, of father and mother, of strangers and of great new things, that invade your little world.

As you grow, and your world grows, so I grow within you.

Honor Thy Mother

With young eyes, with the seeing eyes of passionate love, watch your mother, lovingly follow and watch your mother.

Day after day you will see her doing the things that are needful for you, and needful for others. You will see her sweetening necessity with grace, observing with tenderness the firm disciplines of love, softening the hard outlines of the daily routine with lovingly prepared surprises, adding beauty and nobility to the ancient household arts.

When there is fever and thirst, her hand will be dipped in cooling springs of water, especially for you.

When there are tears, she will know how to come like sunlight over the drenched and darkened hills.

When there are storms, she will know how to wait, how to weather, how to still the elements that rise to a tempest.

At times she will be unequal to all this, and your heart will ache because the much that is expected of her has suddenly become a burden.

There will be evenings when she is over-tired, and you will yearn wistfully that it might not be so, that no one like her should ever be tired.

There will be days when the flower of the spirit lies crushed, and the flesh groans under the burden and the heat. Then you will yourself draw near to minister. And there will be no joy, no wonder of renewal, equal to the joy and the wonder of seeing the light come back to her eyes, and the sweetness restored to her mouth, and the carriage of courage to her body.

From her you will learn how you are to love women—with passionate self-identification with their feelings, with reverent regard for the inner flowering of loveliness, that it be not seared or smothered or bruised, and

for the outward bloom that springs from an inner glory.

From her you will learn of a love which is of the spirit, because it cares more for what it avails in others than for what it draws to itself.

In such a love, so given and so received, the Word is further fulfilled in you. You take the first steps over the threshold into the kingdom of God.

Honor Thy Father

Draw near to this man.

You are more detached from him than from your mother. It is easier to learn from him.

Observe this man at the carpenter's bench. His hands are skillful with tools. There is a sureness of touch in them that goes out to the blade's edge of the chisel, the knife, and encounters understandingly the grain and texture of the wood. This man knows how to make strong wooden plows, the yoke for the oxen, axe-helves and measures, chests and tables. Thoughts unexpressed go through his mind, of Mary, of you, of the others, of God, His people and the Torah. But now he is wholly engrossed in his work. The Word takes shape under the hands of the creator as a thing of usefulness and beauty.

He labors that those whom he loves may live.

He labors also, with the integrity of the craftsman, disinterestedly, for the well-turned lines, the poem made from a tree.

No ugly thing, no thing accursed, will ever be cut from wood by him. This man is incorruptible. He cannot be bought.

This man needs love, honest love, as the earth needs honest love.

But this man can dispense with praise, as the earth can dispense with praise.

There is a quiet strength about him. He adds his strength to Mary's courage.

He likes to test and to examine, to support understanding with fact. He spends hours and hours trying to see the reasons plain for all sorts of things, including Mary's quick, intuitive decisions. But once he has so assembled his thoughts, he has achieved something, like a chest that is solid and substantial, that holds things, and that can be used for a support as well as for storage.

This man knows the commandments, the Psalms, the prophets, the wise sayings, the

things that count in the heritage of his people.

He is just, and patient, and compassionate.

Learn of him, both in being and in doing.

Acquire his craftsmanship, that you may gain also the secret of his character. Thus you may repay him in part and do your share of the world's work. Thus, later on, you may dispense all the more confidently with this kind of work in order to take up a higher.

Respect the Word that comes to you through this man.

Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother

To honor your father and your mother is to honor the heritage that made them.

You are to learn from them the commandments: the first and the greatest, and the second, which is like unto the first.

You are to hear from their lips of the folk tales, the legendary heroes, the poetry and the gnomic wisdom of your people.

You are to know the epic of their liberation from bondage in Egypt, and the greater epic of the struggle from tribalism and idolatry and superstition to the worship of one God.

You are to learn with shame of how they treated the prophets, but also with pride of how and why, from the greatness of their

heritage, men like Isaiah and Micah, and Amos and Jeremiah, arose among them.

You are to know and to feel the present bondage of your people, and to become one with them in their hope of deliverance.

To honor your father and your mother is to accept light and leading from the past.

To honor them rightly is to profit by the opportunity they give you, greater than their own, of absorbing richly from your heritage.

It is to elicit their best and to let it form and inform your conscience.

It is to nourish the soul, which grows only by attachment to the living vine of a heritage.

It is to reach up, as a child, to what you cannot understand, and to grow by reaching up.

It is to let the Word that fashioned the faith, the courage, the inspiration, and the farseeing thoughts of living men in other generations, become incarnate now in you.

Honor Thy Brothers and Thy Sisters

Blessed be the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck

But you were not the only one to be born of that womb, or to draw nourishment from those breasts.

It is a part of your humanity to stand in equality, in that respect, with your brothers and sisters.

It is a part of your schooling in the worth of all souls before God to see the father-impartiality and the wise mother-love at work, distributing evenly of their care and their means among all of their children, extending open favoritism to none, teaching each to accept and to rejoice in the good of the other. Thus the family is created, the basic unit of

sharing, of mutual respect, of each for all and all for each, of openness toward one another and a just love.

To honor your brothers and your sisters is to be your own unique self, and to allow them, ungrudgingly, to be their own unique selves, until you learn to help and encourage them to be what they should be, in and out of themselves.

To honor your brothers and your sisters is to stand—but not to cross them in likewise so standing—in your own unique relationship to your father and your mother.

To honor them rightly is to feel that their otherness is as inviolable and sacred as your own selfhood.

It is to make your own unique exploration of the world, and to share with them all that they may desire or be able to receive.

It is to love them, finally, not because they are your brothers and sisters, but because of what they are, as persons.

Thus you will come to know, through them, the kind of bond you are to create between yourself and persons of other families, tribes

and nations, all of one great lineage as children of God.

Thus you will move on into the inheritance of a higher kinship than that of blood—the kinship of those who, throughout the world, are of the same household of faith.

VII

Honor the World of Things and Creatures

From the innumerable choir that greet the dawn to the last sleepy chirp as darkness falls, the birds seek their food, and mate, and build nests, and sing to the glory of God. Listen, and learn to know their voices. Watch their wonderful flight. Find a name for them.

Come to where the plowman turns a straight furrow down the field. Follow along, and smell the fresh, overturned earth.

Come and follow the sower as he goes forth to sow, in the crisp morning air, when one bird begins to sing and then thousands awaken at once. See how he takes the seed from the sling on his shoulder, and casts it before him in a wide arc. Now the birds fol-

low along with you and pick off the seeds that have fallen on the rocks and on the hard ground.

Step carefully, with bare feet, among the lilies of the field.

See the frail reed bending in the wind, and the golden rhythms of the bearded grain.

The sly fox slinks along the edge of the wood.

The lost sheep bleats in the thicket of the craggy hillside.

The coney scurries for shelter as the shadow of the hawk falls upon the land.

The silvery green olive trees shimmer in the sunlight.

Down the highway in a cloud of dust comes the merchant's caravan, with camels and their exotic attendants, and great bales and baskets of goods.

You are to know the day's work, of the fishermen and their nets down by the Sea of Galilee, of the tillers of corn and the vine-growers, of the shepherds and their great flocks of sheep, of the crafts and duties and rituals of home and shop.

Respect the world of things and of creatures. Let it teach you—of the ancient process of the fruit-bearing earth, of the cloud presaging a shower, of vineyards and orchards, of the peasant's plot of grain, of tares and untended things, of sowing and reaping and times and seasons. Remember these things. They will weave themselves into the poetry of your speech.

Love the great things of this world, like rain and thunder and seas and storms and sunlight, and darkness, and the huge firmament teeming with stars, and the heroic in man.

Never be of those who are insensate and blind, who have forgotten how to listen, and how to look, and how to feel. Nor of those who become cynical and starved, and affect to despise the world of things.

For to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, is also to love His world, in and for itself, as well as to respect its uses.

The Word that is in the world of things is to be known and heeded.

Resist Thy Father and Thy Mother

You will listen to the sacred text, from your parents, from the elders and the rabbis in the synagogue. You will consider their commentaries. You will question them. You will search the scriptures for what they have to say to your own soul.

In your first exciting trip to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, with father and mother and neighbors and friends, you will know whom to seek out. The doctors in the temple will be astonished at your questions, and at your grasp of their answers.

And when your mother reproves you, saying, *Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing*, you will know how to answer. It is the answer of the young man who seeks the

Word, Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

You are not to set your self-will against your father's will, or your mother's, nor merely to test your strength against theirs, less resilient, more hardened in grooves, than your own.

You are not to challenge the authority of their position.

This thing goes deeper.

The Word must become itself in you. It may not be just your father's Word, or your mother's. It must be theirs, but more, and different—in and of you, and in and of your world.

So also the Word of the great heritage, with which, despite its authority, despite its great men who in their day walked with God, you are to wrestle as Jacob wrestled with God and was given a new name.

The Word of the great heritage must become incarnate in you, as knowledge, as insight, as wisdom, as a vision which is distinctly your own.

The Word of your great heritage, as you

have sifted and tried and tested it, must become like a fountain of living waters in your own soul, from which you can draw at need and at will.

The Word must become you.

This is a work to be done slowly.

The temptation will come to you, as you see with a clear eye into the delusions and errors of others, or hear them mumbling by rote and rattling dead skeletons, to expose, or to deal in negatives, or to announce yourself prematurely.

Your human frailties, your weariness, your impatience, will rise like a cloud between you and your vision.

The sufferings, the blindnesses, the yearnings of others, will invade your dreams. Walking alone, on the hills of Galilee, along the dusty highways of Samaria, you will hear a low murmur not audible to the common ear. The groanings of the oppressed, the deep sigh of your people for deliverance, will go with you. And you will long to do something about it, before you are ready, before you know what can or must be done.

Until the wounds of your brotherhood find healing, until your self sinks in the Word, until you are ready to bid farewell to father and mother and all past teachers, because the Word that came from them to you now speaks with your own voice from your own higher self, until the experiences of innumerable others in you have carved your soul deep, until you can speak with authority and have mastered the uses of silence, until you look out upon the world with the eyes of mature and perfected manhood, you must wait.

Beyond the years of the average man you must wait, because the things you must do are more difficult, and what you are to be is greater.

Honor your father and your mother, and resist them—when necessary—quietly, patiently, effectually, that your own Word may come to be.

The Temptations in the Wilderness

The first temptation is to make bread of stones.

Convince by miracle.

Give the people what they want, or what they think they need.

Be the good shepherd merely. Let your pity assuage them. Protect them against having to pay the cost. Give them less than the truth, lest the truth destroy them. Give them less than your finest and best, which none may understand. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they turn again and rend you.* Give them bread made of stones. This is the road to an easy success.

The second temptation is to worship Satan,

that all the kingdoms of the world may lie at your feet.

This is the temptation of harlotry, of vendibility, of living for hire, of offering on terms whatever you have.

Sell your great gifts in order to amass wealth, in order to gain power over others. It is the way of the world. Many a noble spirit, otherwise not far from the kingdom of heaven, has been caught in that web.

Offer your genius and your superb talents to those that can use them, and they will reward you mightily, in what the world calls riches.

The third temptation is to cast yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem.

Open your career in sensational fashion by a sudden and dramatic appearance in Jerusalem, and by sudden and dramatic claims there.

Be public. Put yourself before all the people at once.

Begin your career with the high priests, with the men at the top. Overpower the peo-

ple by converting their masters. Convince the doctors of the temple, by overwhelming them with manifestations of your power. To be accepted you must cultivate the acceptable.

For these three temptations, the temptations of genius and ability, you have the swift and summary answer: *It is written*. The Word in you has power to discharge these devils.

They were set before you vividly that you might know them, in any one of their thousand guises, and in their ultimate nature. Should your frail humanity be tempted to take the easier turn, or to be available for a much desired or sorely needed consideration, or to startle in order to convince, or ever to be diverted or impressed by anything that glitters or is noisy, you shall remember to what these things may lead. You shall recall the wilderness, and what Satan set before you.

The Vision in the Wilderness

Here in the wilderness the burden of the Word is upon you, and you are laid low and almost crushed by what is revealed.

You are shown a vast ocean of misery, past, present, and to come, and what a tiny drop of alleviation in those bitter seas your ministry will accomplish.

You are assured that after you are gone the misery will continue, even as before.

You see visions, as in a dream from which you awaken in an agony of doubt—of prophets prophesying falsely in your name, of the fires of persecution lit by those who call themselves your disciples, of wars waged for the Prince of Peace, of your own people cursed and scattered and killed because of you.

Because of you? No, in spite of you. And, in spite of you, an evil and a bondage to which people cling, down through centuries beyond your vision, the ultimate cruelty of which is that it blinds men to its ugliness, and they refuse to be liberated.

Is this, then, what you are to pit your life against?

Do you think to save men from themselves, or from this world to another?

Having recoiled from the vision, you accept it, and in this is the profundity and the greatness, the wise compassion, the divine insight, and the boundless charity of your mission.

For you will forgive until seventy times seven times—that is, without end. And you will heal the disease of mortal craving, if only in a few rare souls, in order that they may be free, and love selflessly, and enter with pure hearts and open hands into the kingdom of beauty.

For the burden of the Word in you, the Word that struggled toward you through countless ages in travail to be born, is not

that pain and strife and evil shall cease, but that, in a world so darkened, men may come to the inwardness and the light of the kingdom of God. It is that souls may be fashioned, on the anvil of life and under the hammer of destiny—and the anvil and the hammer will never become soft. The burden of the Word in you is that one such soul is worth all the world besides.

With compassion as wide and profound as your vision, you will go among men. But your compassion will avail only where, at its divine touch, the human soul is quickened to life, and where human sufferings are the birthpangs of the spirit.

Fishers of Men

There are those to whom the sea is but a passage, from a shore they have left to a shore they have not yet seen.

There are those for whom only the surface of the sea exists, which they view from a tower.

And there are those to whom the sea is life and death, evil and good, toil and weariness and delight—dangerous, fathomlessly dark, yet quivering to light from its utmost depth. From the elements to which they may not succumb, they draw the substance of life.

These are your fishermen disciples.

Into a sea greater than that of Galilee, they are to cast your net. This sea also is life and death, danger and toil—dark, yet

quivering to light from its utmost depth. To its elements also they may not succumb, yet from them they are to draw the substance of life.

Into the fathomless human sea they are to cast the net of the Word, whose strands were woven and knotted by a chosen succession, and brought to them, completed, by you.

Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Such is the Word to Simon, renamed Peter, the Rock, and to Andrew, his brother, the sons of Jonas. Also to James and John, the fishermen sons of Zebedee.

These men are to leave their fathers and their fathers' boats.

They are to cast a different net into a more difficult sea, and draw men upward toward the light.

They are men who know there are fish in that sea.

They are men with faith to plant their nets, and when they draw them forth empty, to plant them again, and to risk all, and endure to the utmost, in so doing.

They are men with faith in their pilot, faith in him who with keen eye discerns the shoal, and tells them when and where to cast.

They are men who believe and expect and hope.

They recognize instantly the true fisherman.

They have a knowledge of the sacrificial and the heroic, and a capacity for perceiving true greatness.

They shall see the Word stilling the tempest and walking upon the waters.

Disciples

Better a few well trained than a multitude of undisciplined disciples.

Better twelve well taught than twelve hundred who can learn but little and understand still less.

Better three or four who follow their known master than thousands who follow a reputation.

Select with care.

Avoid the ambitious. They crave tangible results. They want their sweat to be paid for in measurable returns. They will insist upon making you successful, and thereby destroying you, or else toss you aside as of no consequence.

Shun the man who knows. Nothing will

impress him, except what settles into the hardened and accustomed grooves of his habitual acceptances.

Leave the self-consciously virtuous to their virtue. They have no need of you. They stand ankle-deep in the waters, lest the tide or the undertow take them and they must cry out for help.

Choose your disciples from among those who hunger and thirst for they know not what, and who never leave off hungering and thirsting. It is among these that you are to test your bread of life and your living waters, as to whether for one moment they will suffice to still the pangs of hunger and to quench the hidden thirst.

Choose as your disciples those that come empty-handed and needy, and again come, closing their ears to the world's clamor, that the Word of life may speak to them.

From among these select an inner and a yet smaller circle of those to whom the Word is to be more fully entrusted.

You cannot teach the many the much that you are to unfold.

Only a few will forsake all others to be always with you.

These are to go with you in your journeyings, night and day, to be received by those who receive you, to encounter with you the scornful, the hostile, the inhospitable and the indifferent, to shield you from the importunate and the inquisitive, to guard and assist your rest, when you are weary unto death from the sorrows and pains and sicknesses you have healed by taking them into yourself.

These are to be taught apart from the others. They are to sit at your feet and drink your words, as in some quiet grove, hours and days apart from the world, you converse with them.

They shall be served by you, and thus be shown how they are to serve others.

With them you shall break bread, and more than bread.

Unforgettably from what you are, with wonder and love in their knowledge of you, they shall learn the greater Word that comes to them through you.

XIII

Solitude

Go alone now.

There are times when there is no rest or balm save in solitude.

All day the unhappy, the distressed, the diseased, the maimed in body and in soul have come, until they seemed like a driven sea, casting its waves of misery at your feet.

Bid Simon bar Jonas and Andrew, and the brothers Zebedee, and all the others, to wait until the morrow.

Turn your face now toward the sunset hills.

The evening and the night are to be yours.

A cool breeze caresses your face. Peace flows into you, peace wells up from within you, away from the babble of voices, alone in the blessed quietness.

The cold insensitive rock, as you lay your

hand upon it, somehow soothes the pain that lies near your heart.

The sunset afterglow, that pales and flakes to colors indescribably cool and tender and soft, is the love of God within you and without, reaching out from your soul and stealing in through your senses, with nothing to mar or hinder their meeting.

The evening star, queen of the twilight, stands radiant in the dusky blue.

A few stars appear.

The hills darken against the sky.

And now as you lie with upturned face, the fathomless heavens open, depth beyond depth, teeming with stars. And it is borne into your soul how great and how numberless are the worlds of God's creation.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

Is this their little world of three rooms, one above the other, called earth and *sheol* and heaven?

Are they to be translated from a dark room called *sheol* to a bright room called heaven?

Is there a destiny for the individual in this universe of mansions measureless and without number?

The stars promise nothing.

The Word that comes to you from the stars is that man, or the son of man, is a creature of earth and its seasons.

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou hast made him to have dominion over the work of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea and the beasts of the field. . . .

Is this, then, the glory of man, in the poor dominion he has won over the beasts of the field? Until the earth reclaims his dust?

The Word that comes to you from the stars is that man's outward dominion is like that of one who gathers up with his fingers a few grains of sand on the shores of a measureless sea, and for as long a time as he can hold these in his hand.

The Word that comes to you from the stars

is no stranger to you. You have heard it before, singing through endless ages before all worlds of magnificent creations to come.

The glory of man is that he can hear that Word.

The glory of man is that the Word comes to him also from within.

You will deliver to men the Word that comes to you from the stars, of *the Father in heaven who makes the sun to shine, and the rain to fall, on the just and the unjust alike*. And you will deliver also the Word that comes to you from within, of *I and the Father are one, and the kingdom of God is within you*.

They that have ears to hear will hear. In whom the ground is prepared the seed will quicken.

Now close your eyes to the everlasting universe of stars, with complete trust becoming one with Him in sleep, who on the morrow will restore you to your self.

They That Wait for Beatitude

Bless them that are poor in the things of this world. Unencumbered by the weight of earthly things, they may yet learn to be rich toward God.

Bless them that are poor in spirit and know their need, for they shall hunger inwardly and be fed.

Bless them that are of a lowly station, whose only exaltation is to walk humbly before God.

Bless them that are meek, knowing their unworthiness, craving neither recognition nor reward. They know what it is to love and to enjoy the earth. Only they shall truly possess.

Bless them that wait for God, as for a bridegroom returning from the wedding, that

when he comes and knocks, they may open and let him in.

Bless them that are merciful to all creatures. Their hearts are prepared for the good seed. They shall be judged mercifully.

Bless them that are single of purpose and pure of self-seeking. They shall see God.

Bless the peacemakers, in whom God's purposes are fulfilled.

Bless them that are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Through them the kingdom is brought nearer.

Bless them that curse not.

Bless them that enjoy in innocence, as from the hand of God, the good things of this life—in whom the canker of care and the worm of envy corrode not, nor destroy. These are the children of your kingdom.

Bless them that trust wholly in God, with body, mind, and heart.

Bless them that judge not, who consider the fault only to find the hidden vein of gold.

Bless them that redeem life from sordidness and futility.

Bless them with the blessing of your love.
Bless them with the Word that scatters the
proud, puts down the mighty, and exalts
them of low degree. Bless them with the
bread and wine of your life, through par-
taking of which they become brothers forever
in the divine household.

Miracles

They plead with you for signs and wonders, they that hunger, not for the Word, but for an earthly deliverance.

In Nazareth they dare you to produce such signs and wonders, and, when you disappoint them, they turn against you in blind rage and envious hatred.

Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?

This is the unforgivable presumption, that a man whom they knew, a man who served them at the carpenter's bench, should bring them the Word. Let him bring miracles.

On all sides they shall clamor for omens from heaven and the magic of miracle, blind

to the miracle of what you are, insensitive to the wonder of what they have it in them to be.

Remembering Satan in the wilderness, the stones, the kingdoms of this world, and the pinnacle, you shall resist them.

Yet, because of the healings that flow from your presence, because of the devils of fear and insanity you will drive out, the legend will grow of the wonder-worker from Galilee.

The hearts of those that respond to yours, their new serenity of mind, the deeply healing and restorative qualities of inward peace, shall indeed produce miracles of faith. But these shall be misunderstood and distorted. Crude and lesser wonders shall be brought forth to prove that the greater wonders took place.

Be not dismayed.

The Word that goes forth from you will not return void.

A thousand wonder-tales and distortions will not avail to hide from the discerning the import of what you are.

Your everlasting triumph will come in the

moment when you seem most helpless. When the magic for which the fleshly-minded wait stands impotent before tragedy and doom, when all that the world calls miracle fades to shadow and shrinks to nothingness, the true miracle shall shine forth, as you turn your face heavenward and pray, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

The Sabbath for Man

The sabbath's ultimate sanction is to be found in the eternal within man.

It is the inner adoration of soul, the contrite spirit, the questing and prayerful mind of man, that sanctify the sabbath.

The end is to be sought, not in the institution, but in the man whom the institution serves.

The inviolable is not engraven upon tablets of stone, but upon the tablets of man's heart.

What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

This is the revolutionary word you have come to set forth.

This is the doctrine the world shall reject.

This men shall be unwilling or agonizingly slow of heart to understand.

They shall exalt lesser ends, and violate one another in the pursuit of those ends.

They shall oppress, they shall distort and starve the children of men, for goods worth infinitely less than the soul of one of the least of these.

Yet down through the millenniums your word shall echo in men's hearts.

It shall never be silenced.

The Son of Man must become lord of the sabbath.

The spirit of man must become the master of his instruments.

To extinguish or to violate one's own possibilities for good is the first and the greatest sin. And the second, which is like unto the first, is to extinguish or to violate in another.

To value anything save as it ministers to the soul is the worship of Mammon.

To construct gods with the hands or in the mind, while dead to the divinity within, is blindness and idolatry.

In this wilderness men shall wander, wasting themselves in bitter and futile strife, until they turn again to the Word of life:

*The sabbath was made for man, not man
for the sabbath.
What shall it profit a man, if he gain the
whole world, and lose his own soul?
The kingdom of God is within you.*

Whoso Looketh upon a Woman

Often, in a boy's daydreams, you pictured yourself as lover, husband, and father.

Often, as the powers of your manhood grew, you were like the sun-tormented earth in your desire. Imperious womanhood drew near to you in your dreams.

Even now your longings reach out toward the sating of that which sings in your blood. For you are a man, and the desire of a man is toward a woman.

Take the comfort of Martha coming to serve you.

Take the comfort, sweeter still, of Mary listening and looking up to you in adoration.

In what you have renounced, the renunciation is difficult. There is passion and glory

in the desires of the flesh, and the dreams of men magnify what they deny themselves or what life withholds from them.

Although it is part of your humanness to need the love of a woman, the mission of your divine manhood asks that you sacrifice the fulfillment of that need.

For it is with the same selfless love with which you love men that you are to love women.

It is in the entire absence of the longing to possess that you are to love women, in order that you may be detached and strong and utterly unclouded in seeing and loving the divine reality of their womanhood.

You are to look dispassionately upon the outward beauty, that you may penetrate with divine passion to an inward beauty of soul.

You are to look compassionately upon outward coarseness or degradation, seeing beyond into the inner loveliness or the smothered potentiality of good.

You are to love without claims, without bondage, without partiality or regret, but not without pain, disappointment and frustra-

tion, nor yet without blessedness, caring deeply in order to help greatly.

By the redemptive power of such love you are to elicit in Mary of Magdala that divine capacity of her womanhood by which she will renounce wickedness and pride, and serve and adore you for what you are.

In all this you are to be a pattern for all men.

For all men need to learn this kind of love, lest they seek impossible fulfillments from lesser loves.

All men need to learn to love selflessly, for only such love can include many.

All men need to learn to love the inner flowering of good, lest lust rove untamed or course in dark channels of evil and oppression.

And all men need to learn that the sacrifice of the lower to the higher can bring rich fulfillments, of the love that through you works miracles in others.

XVIII

*Let the Little Children Come
unto Me*

The thing you have struggled to keep (and therefore these children, therefore these retreats to the green hillsides of Galilee) is the still listener, the wonderer trembling on the verge of speech, that grows within the growing life of the child.

The child's fresh loveliness of seeing, the young dream toward unknown greatnesses to come, the prayer of becoming, the aching swelling tide of the unfulfilled, you have sought ever to renew in your life. When, because of care or the press and clamor of this unquiet world, this center of stillness, this wonder of the heart, this reaching out of the mystery and the beauty within, is

disturbed or lost to you, then it seems to you that the voice of your Father is far off or stilled. Then, no matter how many are near, or the more devastatingly because others with their din come crowding in upon you, you walk alone, and you are unutterably sad.

What you then need you cannot toil to regain.

To be anxious whether this grace shall return to you on the morrow is to push it farther from you.

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, in stillness and from within.

Consider the children, how they grow, without fretfulness of striving.

Draw near to them, and through them to the child in you.

They are humble without knowing it.

They have not yet hardened into pride.

Their eyes have not yet been blinded by minds that know before they look, or by hearts that cannot quicken and expand to recognition.

They turn to the leadings of love, as a plant turns toward the sun.

They wait on the verge of deepest wonder.

To enter the kingdom of heaven it is necessary to become like them, to be ready again to listen and able to see.

Not the Righteous but Sinners

The thirst for felicity, the deep craving for an inner significance of life, the passion for that which lies beyond easy reach, you have sometimes found among men who seek to slake their thirst in vice, among the broken in spirit who despise their bodies, among children of the market place contending for baubles, but never among those who deem themselves righteous.

They that feed contentedly in the pastures of self-righteousness, and in a still pool of complacency adore their own image, have cushioned with fatness, smothered with self-praise for easy merit, the promptings of the Spirit.

They do not themselves enter the kingdom,

and will not suffer others to enter, naming truth and good their own, and withholding from the heavy-laden the cup of communion and compassion.

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is the leaven of spiritual pride.

They shall have more followers than these your little ones, and down through the ages they will hide you from men.

Theirs is the sin of being always right, the utter lostness of those who are never lost.

Among the lowly you have found penitence and the unhonored goodness of those who love.

Among sinners you have found need, the deep disquietude of those who know that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and naked, and blind.

To them you will go.

The Son of Man is come to seek that which is lost.

They will come seeking you.

Like a wise and tender physician, you will give them first the Word of healing:

Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

Woman, thy faith hath made thee whole.

Go in peace.

Be reconciled to thy brother.

Thence you will lead them, the poor in spirit, in becoming rich toward God.

xx

The Prodigal Son and the Elder Brother

You have known the prodigal son.

You have seen him wasting his father's substance.

You have seen him, homeless and in want, in the hearts of all men.

The prodigal son flees from his unfulfilled self, and in a far country of husks and loneliness he turns to find the love that followed him.

The elder brother, who would keep the wandering self from returning—suppressing under a hard crust of duty the joy of coming home, and complaining that God looks past his virtues—him too you have known. He does not yet understand that the Father who

welcomes his erring brother seeks also in him only the homeless prodigal.

The elder brother has done what it was his duty to do, unaware of that something greater which is demanded of the person who loves. Drawing near to his father's house, he hears the sound of music and dancing, and stands without, asking a servant what these things may be.

And still he stands outside.

The feast of joy is for them that have eaten husks in a far country, that have been dead and are alive again, that were lost and are found.

Relentless is the love that will have nothing less than love's homecoming.

Not To Destroy, But To Fulfill

Because you have set aside the letter of the lesser law for the spirit of the greater, men call you a destroyer.

Because the law is not a stone wall constraining you, but a direction your whole self has chosen, men accuse you of crossing forbidden fields.

There are those who would have you violate the divine law of compassion, of mercy and imagination and healing for others, for the lesser law of the sabbath.

To them, and to all, you shall speak of a profounder ritual of right:

Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca!—whosoever shall say, Thou Fool!—whosoever shall despise his brother or shall speak to him

contemptuously, makes fallow his heart for the seeds of murder.

Whosoever lusts after evil in his heart, has already committed himself to that evil.

Whosoever desires to avenge or to retaliate, warms an evil seed that grows in the dark.

A disciple shall value his own soul more than all the world besides. And he shall love his neighbor as himself.

He shall return blessings for curse and good for evil, he shall give without asking return, because the reins of his heart have been given to God, and because the love that creates, not the hate that destroys, is planted there.

This is your Word. And this is why you can say, *Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all shall be fulfilled.*

Of Being and Becoming

To become more of me, you must become, not less yourself, but less imprisoned in the bonds of self.

In self-forgetful giving, you throw wider the gateways through which I come.

In self-forgetful and in loving speech, you find the Word within which I live.

At times your very human passions and resentments will stand in the way.

You will forget and denounce, condemning the Pharisee, cursing the fig tree that is without fruit.

Not as a man standing and judging other men are you to speak, but as a man who speaks the divine Word, which is itself judgment and truth and ultimate grace.

Your merely human speech will pass.

The foolish, the sentimental, will regret its loss, wishing that every word that fell from your lips, since childhood, had been written and preserved.

There will be those who would worship the lesser you.

There will be those who would worship me in you.

But the true worshipers shall worship the Everlasting Father, of whom I am eternally begotten, and by whom you have been exalted through me.

Your true disciples shall treasure above all the divine Word that comes to them through you.

They shall give self-forgetfully, throwing wider the gates through which forever I come.

They shall speak and act with love, converting my silence into the music of God's presence.

Greater things shall they do than they now witness.

Greater songs shall they sing than are now sung.

This is the promise of your fulfillment.

The divine music that soon in its fullness shall be heard through you shall prompt others to sing down through endless ages yet to come.

Transfiguration

Now you have entered, ravished and speechless, into the silence of the Word.

You are overcome and overborne by the full nearness of the terrible and tender majesty of God.

The power that creates and recreates the world has taken the place of your self, and all your otherness melts into the vision and the completion of your sonship.

In your utter self-surrender is the perfection of your freedom, in which now, because you are the Word, you permeate and transform the world.

The veil of the temple has been drawn aside, and you have entered into the holy of holies.

The swaying trees of time are caught up
into the winds of the eternal.

Now the burden is lifted, and with liberated soul you meet, and accept, and make your destiny.

In the heavenly light reflected upon you, you look upon Him who says, *Thou art my beloved Son!*

You have known a world transfigured and overcome, and this is your transfiguration.

The Messianic Dream

There are those with hurt pride who dream of a Messiah. They would sit beside him, occupying the seats of the proud.

There are those who dream of a glory that never was, and who hug to their bosoms the promise of its restoration.

There are those who believe themselves a chosen bride, and that the Lord of heaven and earth shall be their groom.

There are those who hate the oppressor and believe that God will vindicate their hate.

There are those who suffer oppression, and hardly dare to believe. There are those who are as dust under the feet of the proud, and have never had reason to hope. There are

those who bend under a burden, and those who are seared and twisted with pain. They have heard of a blessed deliverer, but the only Angel of Mercy they have known to come surely is the Angel of Death.

To these latter you will long to say that heaven will come down to earth, especially for them.

To the maimed and the halt and the blind, the weary and the heavy-laden, your divine pity would gladly bring down heavenly showers of relief:

To bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

This is your greatest temptation, to say that vengeance upon the oppressor, and double for their shame to the oppressed, and an everlasting joy of redemption in Zion, shall

come as the lightning from heaven. Your compassion will long to adopt this hope and to nourish this dream.

But the Word within you is that the kingdom of heaven is like unto a mustard seed.

The kingdom of heaven is an invisible leaven in the life of the world.

Unless men become as children, trustfully committing their cares to the Father of all, believing in life at its core, loving life at its core, finding the kingdom of God within them and through love drawing near to it in others, they shall in nowise know blessedness.

When they ask you for the kingdom of carnal glories, and for thrones built up by toiling aliens and ministering kings, you shall say, *Consider the lilies of the field!*

There are those who will hate you for this.

Others will turn away to the old nostalgic dream.

When you are gone, they will look for you, where clouds roll up from the horizon, where lightning and falling stars flash from the firmament.

But in their hearts only will they find you.

In their hearts only will they know the Christ that brings peace.

Down through the ages the words of them that make you Master of a mistaken dream will be forgotten, but the everlasting Word of the kingdom within shall speak through seers and poets, wherever the rising sun looks upon the children of hope and wonder and joy.

Down to Jerusalem

Down to Jerusalem, carrying the burden of the Word, now light, now heavier than mortal flesh can bear.

Down to Jerusalem, troubled in spirit concerning those who walk with you. They are the field in which you have sown. Hardly as yet do the green blades appear.

Dreaming of the twelve thrones from which they would judge the twelve tribes of Israel, they ask, *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*

For answer you call a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and say, *Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

Will they remember? Do they understand?

Down to Jerusalem—followed by anxious

and saddened disciples, who hope against hope that the plain import of your speech is not what you intend, that in your words there are cryptic messages of the throne of David resurrected from the grave of its disaster.

Down to Jerusalem, in the crowded pilgrimage of the Passover. And your great compassionate heart is stirred over the multitudes who are as sheep having no shepherd, over the children of the market place and the heartbreak of their snatching and contending, over the holy city itself and the fading sunset glory of a great, but self-centered, dream.

If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

Down to Jerusalem, where the city pours forth its rout of the idle, the curious, the sensation-seekers, the miracle-mongers, and the naïvely expectant, to greet you with hosannas, and palms for another King-Messiah.

In the hubbub, saddened, you slip quietly away.

One of the twelve, in Jerusalem, makes a bargain with the enemy, in order that the hour of your vindication may be brought closer, and the clouds from which the lightning is to strike may gather swiftly in the sky. His mistaken hopes, his tortured mind and darkened heart, are known to you, and you forgive him in advance.

Down to Jerusalem, where the enemy, the eternal enemy, lies in wait.

The fears of Rome, the fears of the high priests that rule by sufferance of Rome, are closing around you like an iron ring.

They that find their safety in being ridden and regulated dread the contagion of freedom.

The thralls of fate stand fearful before him who comes to meet and make his destiny.

They that are unable to master, and dream themselves rulers, live in terror of the sovereign man.

The chosen victim of their fears and confusions, the chosen sacrifice for their guilt, you are to be hunted and apprehended. In

protest against their own impotence, they would kill you.

All this is vaguely known to you. It gathers like ice around your heart as you walk the streets of the holy city of your fathers.

Think now of your disciples. See to it that the flesh and the blood of an otherwise futile sacrifice shall be meat and drink to them, that you and the Word that speaks through you shall live on afterwards in them, shall become bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh—that as they now live in you so you shall live in them, for ever and ever, world without end.

Out of Gethsemane

The disciples sleep.

Into the night air rises the whisper of a prayer. Or is it the rustle of leaves in the soft wind that comes down from the mountain?

The disciples toss uneasily, in a sleep drugged by weariness, underneath which are layers of struggle and disquietude.

And now a moaning, as of a human soul in mortal agony. Or is it the wind rising, the wind rising to waken the sleeping sorrow of the world, to shake a slow music of mourning from the olive trees in the garden?

You have known the meaning of sorrow. You have loved life. You have been ravished and torn with the love of life. The terror of death has fallen upon you.

Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.

With a deep sigh the wind subsides.

All is quiet once more, serene in moonlight and shadow. The trees stand in silent adoration. The night air in the garden is sweetened with the fragrance of peace.

Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come.

They come, the servants of the High Priest with staves, the Roman soldiers with swords, a mad Judas to show them the way.

The moment which Judas sought, and for which he bartered his soul, is at hand.

The heavens do not open, before the awe-stricken disciples and the superstitious hirelings of the High Priest, to let down the angels of the patriarchs, the mothers, and the prophets, of Moses, Elijah and Jeremiah.

The soldiers do what they were sent to do.

The disciples scatter and flee.

You are led off—to a High Priest who prefers that one innocent man should perish rather than that an institution be endangered;

to a Rome that fears the spirit of a people,
the hidden hope more than the hidden
arsenal.

The High Priest and his servants half fear
that you may indeed be He that comes to
reign over Israel.

It is safe to turn you over, for if you are
the King-Messiah, you will deliver yourself
and others.

Let Pilate be the sign!

The Roman procurator is contemptuous of
this fear. But he has a fear of his own—a
fear of a people's dream.

To all this there is nothing for you to say.

Your hope is in the seed that lies silent in
the ground.

Your hope is in Him that sent you, whose
Word will not return unto Him void.

The Cross and Beyond

The High Priest does what he thinks will save the people from the sword.

Pilate does what he thinks is right by Rome.

The priest and the procurator would silence the prophet. In trying you, they put themselves on trial, and disclose their own guilt. This they load upon you, and send you off as a sacrifice to the savage god they believe in.

You are given over to the torturers.

The officers of the garrison scourge you up the hill to the place of the crucifixion, seeking to punish and to kill in you the Christ by whom they are tortured within themselves.

Not for one instant can they bring you down to their own level of contempt.

Therefore they hate you with an intense fury of hatred.

Humanity the Christ, persecutor and persecuted, writhes on the cross, wherever and whenever men torture and hate.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land. . . .

Into your bursting heart you gather a compassionate God's pity, deep beyond all understanding, and pray, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

The earth tugs with its spinning weight at your torn hands and feet.

You are stretched apart by the wood.

The air is like fire in your lungs.

Upon the pitiless turning away of all creation, your great heart breaks with a cry of forsakenness.

Yet never so much were you God's son, as when you are thus forsaken.

Never so much was the inner beauty made manifest, as now when the whole world is lost for its sake.

A sleep and a numbness overtake your body, and strength flows back into your soul.

Dying, you are uplifted.

Dying, you are reborn into a greater love.

The unforgettable cadences of the divine poem of your life will live in the music of man's soul, for ever and ever.

The world will remember, because it cannot forget, God's utterance which was your life, and God's utterance which is your life in countless other lives yet to come.

Your words will be written upon parchment, but only because they were first written upon men's hearts.

They shall be inscribed upon tablets of bronze, and carved into granite and marble.

Should the parchment become ashes, and the bronze be melted, and the stone pounded to dust, still your words will be laid up in men's hearts, as they were in the beginning, and be passed on from father to son, from mother to children, from generation to generation, so long as men have speech. Alleluia.

Throughout the Ages and Beyond

Where two or three are gathered together in your name, there you will be in the midst of them.

Where men who work for liberation and justice must toil apart and alone, because they are driven and dispersed, there you will be to each the invisible companion of the heart, bringing hope beyond expectation, faith beyond sight, courage beyond martyrdom.

Where men minister with bread for the hungry, with a cup of cold water for those who thirst, and with deeds that attain their merit from love, in reverence for the betrayed or smothered image of God in the soul of man, there you make to yourself again a body, there the tabernacle of God is with men.

Wherever men reach out hands to one
another across barriers, they shall touch
yours.

Wherever men love the earth and each
other, they shall walk with you the hills and
highways of a holy land.

In those who hunger and thirst for good-
ness, and in the soul that waits in quiet si-
lence the divine birth within, your revelation
will blossom ever anew. In every age you
shall reappear.

The grain of mustard seed you have
planted shall become a great tree, whose
leaves shall be for the healing of men and
of nations.

The vision of the divine man will grow
clearer and more majestic.

In the soul of man, in depths beyond space
and time, it will merge into the being of
God.

And when all things shall be subdued unto
him, then shall the Son also himself be sub-
ject unto Him that put all things under him,
that God may be all in all.

Epilogue

THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM

*I am the true vine,
And my Father is the husbandman.
Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he
taketh away;
And every branch that beareth fruit,
He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more
fruit.*

*Now ye are clean
Through the word which I have spoken unto
you.*

Abide in me, and I in you.

*As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, ex-
cept it abide in the vine;*

No more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Partake of this Life, and live.

Take, eat, this is my body.

This is the ancient word.

God became wheat,
God became broken body and poured blood,
That men might become.
God became the Son of man,
That men might become the sons of God.
God became man,
That man might become God.
Thou shalt be changed into Me.
Partake of this Death, and live.
If the wood is to be made fire,
Then the nature of the wood must die.
Let men yield to the holy death of selfhood.
Then let their human nature be aflame with
the glory and the unconsuming fire of God.

Partake of this Resurrection, and live.
*For the Word of God which saveth and re-
deemeth,*
Which giveth life and light to the soul,
Is not the word printed on paper,
But is that eternal, ever-speaking Word
which is the Son of God,
Who in the beginning was with God,
And is the God by whom all things were
made.

*This is the universal teacher and enlightener
of all that are in heaven and on earth;
Who, from the beginning to the end of time,
without respect of persons,
Stands at the door of every heart of man,
Speaking into it not human words but divine
goodness;
Calling and knocking, not with outward
sounds but by the inward stirring of an
awakened divine life.*